

# CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR FANZINE ISSUE #4



DETROIT'S SOURCE FOR LOCAL PUNK ROCK

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# *WHERE HAS THE WILL TO POWER GONE?*

## */A DISCLAIMER FOR THE READER*

Where has the will to power in humanity disappeared to? Anywhere, everywhere, man has laid down his arms and ended his resistance in the hopes of survival, the hope to live on his knees in perpetuity. Where man once faced his resistors with unyielding pursuance, he is now rendered fearful and sick with a secular, non-religious disease. Where man once lived content with his image and existence, he is now ever-changing to fit the most socially potent blueprint for his current needs. Where he once raised his fists to overcome his resistors, destroy them and grow in strength, he seeks the path that which most quickly returns him to his addictive, lethargy-inducing cocoon.

What has possessed man to divert from his once-comfortable pursuance of power? The ultimate culprit here is the post-World War II culture. The rise in disposable income, the perceived need for personal security, and unparalleled impatience (and need for immediate gratification) have been the three pillars of this social construction centered on this doom-ridden armistice of mankind. The increase in disposable income has implemented the false illusion of worth through assets and possessions rather than actions and pursuances; a simple existence of frugality and decreased desires has been discarded in favor of unnecessary material possessions (not to mention a wealth of immaterial debt) and a culture focused on catering to consumers with impatient immediacy. Only greater ground is capitulated with regard to personal security; instead of combating the resistors of a healthy and thriving city, man has lowered his fists, sheathed his sword, and sprinted to the sterilized suburbs, leaving the pungent problems plaguing a neighborhood to infect and breed unanswered to these seditious suburban scum. This perceived sense of security left man untouched by urban problems, priming his veins for an opiate-induced comforting numbness. Comfort breeds boredom, boredom breeds contentment, contentment breeds compromise, and compromise is the cancer that afflicts the power-pumped *Urbemensch* and his will to power.

The great *Urbemensch* lies beaten, bloodied and bogged with the concept of seeking a ceasefire with the socially aristocratic *Untermensch*. However, the *Urbemensch* is too a stoic; for man to survive, he must survive and weather the social storm of compromise-seeking simpletons. Where social sanctions cause surrender in the lower man, the *Urbemensch* wipes the blood from his mouth, resists the inebriation of warmth and plenty and lunges to resurrect the urgency of poverty, crushing resistors and minimizing the misdirected social growth of the sickly cowards and their social subordinates. This sinister existence of *Urbemenschia* will come to rise and subvert the resistors of society.

# ***INTERVIEW WITH J. VOLTAGE OF AGGRO OR DIE!***

## **What was your introduction to punk rock? What was that like for you to experience?**

Well I guess that would depend on your definition of "first experience". It's funny really, but as a kid, I had no idea the music I listened to was punk rock at all. Like most kids growing up, I just listened to what my parents listened to, and children just like what their parents like because we look up to them. But I had really cool parents and people in my life, especially in my teenage years; my step-father Gary was one of them. So, in sorts, you could say my first punk rock experience was seeing the Ramones play the Michigan State Fairgrounds; but, I was way too young to fully wrap my head around that at the time. So, I feel my first real punk rock experience was in high school.

You see, I got in a fight with some kids over this Black Flag shirt I wore to school that day. I stole this shirt from my step-dad's closet before school that morning. Ya know, so I could be "cool" and wear a sweet ass punk shirt, seeing as I had the attitude to match. And it back-fired. All that day, kids called me "Black Fag" until I just couldn't take it anymore. So I tried to kick their asses; even though I failed, they never called me "Black Fag" ever again. So I ran all the way home and as I approached my front door, I realized that in the fight, I had gotten blood and rips on his shirt. I knew he'd be at the table next to the front door waiting for me to come home so we can shoot the shit. So I flipped it inside out and as soon as I got the shirt back on, he opened the front door. What was I thinking? How was I to hide a white shirt with black letters on the front now saying "galF kcalB" across my chest? Not to mention the fact that it was pretty much destroyed. He just stood in the door way looking down at me. He took off his ball cap, wiped the sweat from his forehead, twice, and smirked.

Hiding his laughter he said as sternly as he could, "Dude, we need to talk". "So, you like that band?" he said. So I was like, "Um yeah dude, they're pretty rad?" He knew I just wore it because he liked them, and talked about them all the time. All the kids in my school had no idea about music unless it was on MTV and it would make the kids think I was cutting edge or something. Dude, we all start off as posers, right? He thought this was like the opportunity of a lifetime. He said, "Kid, have I got a surprise for you, Mr. punk rocker!" He brought out four huge ass crates of records, reels, and note books. You see, he used to book and interview bands back in the late 70's up to the mid 80's. The man had tons of cool shit that he just gave to me. Most kids get into punk rock because their parents or society doesn't understand them. But for me it was very different; like I said, my parents were very cool. As for my first taste of a 'real punk rock show', that next weekend, my step-dad was reading the local rag or 'zine. He was laughing out loud as he said, "Tomorrow I'm taking you to a real punk rock show. But I'll let you choose, seeing as you like punk bands based on the name of the band alone, so Butthole Surfers or Jack Kevorkian and the Suicide Machines, what's it gonna be?" I chose the Suicide Machines. I can remember being there with my step dad and all the kids calling me a poser. And he told me we're all posers at one time or another. He said "Fuck 'em; none of these assholes have parents cool enough to get in the pit with them". And ya know, he was right. I jumped in the pit and never looked back.

## **What bands were you in (including high school bands) before Aggro or Die! became your primary project?**

Well I tried to start a band in high school, but a majority of kids I went to school with just did not get me at all, with the exception of one dude I tried to make a band with. But, he told all the kids we toured cross-country with Rancid, which never happened. That pretty much ruined my chances of starting anything serious while I was in high school. But in the summer of '98, I was asked by a friend of mine to start a "project of sorts" and after months of asking he finally lured me to his parents' house to start Nuke and the Toxic Offenders. That band played its first show on Halloween night in 1999. We were a band until December 2002.

It started as a cure for our boredom and to have an excuse to get off the couch and do something on the weekends. We didn't really have a lot of friends, and weren't particularly cool or anything. We never really knew the potential of that band until that potential outgrew the band. We were also a bit naive as well, but that band would eventually be the driving force behind the things Nuke and I do today. To this day he is one of my closest friends.

### **When did A.O.D.! really begin to come to fruition?**

You mean like how Aggro or Die! got started? Okay, well as I was saying in the last question, after Nuke and I had parted ways in 2002, I was devastated; I had basically locked myself up in my basement for almost two years. Yeah you could say I took it hard; I did. During that time, I wrote some very angry music. At first I was just going to do the Toxic Offenders minus Nuke with all new music. I was originally going to do the vocals for this band, but all in all, I just wanted to step away from the Toxic Offenders thing altogether. In hindsight I felt too bitter, but didn't want it to show. Besides, if I was to do a band like Nuke at all, I'd have to be able to compete with his vocals. No chance dude! I'm no singer for sure, so I dropped that altogether. Besides, as the two years went by, my anger towards Nuke was beginning to fade, so I proposed the idea on the guys.

At the time it was Dave Bones and "then" Mark Evil of the Toxic Offenders. I tried to sing for my first time and the boys suggested that we look for another singer. So, I took that as defeat and just gave in. But my brother Mike stepped in. Just as I threw in the towel he was right behind me to snap me right in the ass with it. He made me a bet that he could get some dudes that not only get my music, but won't give a shit about the Nuke stuff. Even though we had been trying various musicians for the last two years, they all ended in "You don't wanna sound like Nuke?" to "Dude this shit is way too fast! You never played this fast in Nuke!" But that was my whole point! I didn't want to. I was trying to do something that said more about who I am. My brother Mike found Eddie later that week. Now, I had named Aggro or Die! long before this, I was just unsure on how to explain the name. So I just used the acronym "A.O.D" and told everyone who ever tried out that the name is up for debate but "A.O.D" is not. I had a purpose with that, but with new band mates coming in, I didn't wanna scare 'em off with a name they might not get. Eddie got his friend Eric to play bass and knew a guy named Matt who was interested in singing, which was good for me cus' I'm a bit of a chicken shit. Not soon after, I got with guys and had to explain "A.O.D". This bit's a little on the personal side, but I'll tell ya. Aggro or die! means many things. On one side, it's the name of a song by my favorite band 7 Seconds. On the personal end, it was my way of reminding me of where I came from; while I may be able to do many things with this life, to quit is not one of them. So the name Aggro or Die! is my analogy for how I live my life. It's like do or die to the very fullest of the term. Or simply shit or get off the pot. They all had ideas for "A.O.D." but I just wanted to use Aggro or die! and since then I've yet to run into a kid that doesn't say "what is an Aggro or Die!?". And, I like to explain how I came up with the name, as well as to recount it, and I never get tired of it. It feels personal to me. After all, naming a band is supposed to be personal, it don't get more personal than that. Ironically enough, Aggro or Die! played its first show with Nuke and the Living Dead on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2006. Aggro or Die! took four years to happen.

### **What was playing in Nuke and the Toxic Offenders like?**

A blur; I'm kidding. It was over way too fast though. I had some very cool moments being in Nuke and the Toxic Offenders. At first, the scene for our kind of music hadn't really hit Detroit too hard yet, plus I'm pretty sure we just wrote what we were capable of at first. We were no musicians when we started, but as time went on, we really pushed the whole "punk rock and roll thing", mixing up old style rock and roll with surf and punk. In the end, I think we were very capable of crafting the sound we wanted, and before too long, bands were following in our footsteps. I won't lie, it felt pretty cool. That band catapulted me into music so hard, it's all I've known ever since.

Nuke had very strict practice and show routines; he was a very well organized front man and I've learned a whole lot from him. The thing about the Toxic Offenders I liked most was not really having a scene to answer to. We kinda carved our own path and we just did not take shit from anyone. The best part of being in the Toxic Offenders was living by our own rules; that, and being offensive to those we thought were dicks anyway. Some highlights that I remember most are seeing great bands like the Koffin Kats, V8 Nightmare at first, playing many of their first shows with Nuke and the Toxic Offenders. Shit, it's downright surreal having Vic Victor hold the Toxic Offenders as highly as he does. In many ways, he has kept the spirit of my first band alive and well. Nuke and I poke around at the idea of doing a reunion show every so often. Who knows, maybe we'll actually do it someday.

**Does punk rock mean as much to you as it did when you were younger? Why?**

I'd say more in every way possible. I mean while you're a kid, punk is kinda a place of belonging or something different to get into that kinda separates you from the pack; but as I get older, I realize how much more than that it is. You begin to realize its potential as a vehicle for your generation's voice. When I first got into punk, all I cared about was going to shows or what band was playing and with whom, never really paying attention what went into getting bands into the shows and the kids into the music. Now it seems as though the kids have become numb to music at all, or at least enough to feel it directly (in the scene, that is). Scenes have pretty much dwindled away, and let's face it, Michigan is broke and so are half the bars and clubs. So that plays a factor in lack of places for bands to play, which causes a lack of interest for the kids, and I think if they don't see this as a huge problem, punk as you and I know it will die. If we don't care enough to raise our voices, or think in radical ways, the music and scene we all say we love will vanish into obscurity. So yeah, it means way more now than it did then. I think I owe it to myself as well as others to keep this thing going, or at least give it my best shot.

**Do you feel the first Keep It a Threat festival was a success?**

Absolutely; if you're asking questions about it, or other kids are asking about it, then yes. There were lots of things I wish we could have done better. But we'll learn from it and carry that over in years to come. I'm having fun with it and that's what counts.

**Was it hard to adjust to doing vocals after Matt left?**

I'd be a liar if I said no; Matt was a great singer and front man, as well as an amazing and dynamic personality for Aggro or Die!. When Matt announced his leaving Aggro, his last request as a member of Aggro or Die! was that he do a final record with us, and that I should pick up after him as the band's lead singer, just as I should have when the band started. His reasons were all valid; if I write most of the words and music, then having me sing them would make sense. If anything, I'd mean the words more than anyone else, and that's a huge part of Aggro or Die!. However, mixed feedback from friends, fans and family, having me sing and not play guitar just didn't seem like the thing for us.

We've had great support in this transition. Jason (Hellmouth) had our back and suggested we try his friend Jeff out; while Jeff was a perfect fit vocally, he was far too busy at that moment in his life, as well not wanting to support a record that he would not fully be on. At that time we were still thinking having Matt on the record would not be a bad idea. In his words as well as our own, a singer should support and push a record if they plan to be on it, and that's a very true statement. So even though things didn't work out with Jeff, he left a more than lasting impression on us. We then decided to lessen vocals for Matt on the up and coming record: Half Matt, half me. Unfortunately, through poor communication, Matt didn't like the idea at all. While I understand Matt's point of view, if Aggro or Die! were going to move in the forward direction, we should just start over.

So I took Jeff's advice and decided to front Aggro or Die! myself, and while it's been difficult to adjust to, my band-mates have given positive feedback and are happy with this decision. No doubt it feels different not having a guitar do the talking for me, but I am content on how things are coming along. Hell, I've never sung for anybody, let alone front a band, but I like the feeling I get doing it.

**Has Aggro or Die! changed its sound now that you're singing?**

I'm sure it may sound different on record, but that has always been a goal for us. Aggro or Die! really doesn't have a specific sound to be exact; at least, not in my opinion. We kinda just go with a general theme for the record side of things while focusing on live shows and maintaining our own sound for them. As for the vocals, that's up to the listener to judge, but I think things are a bit more fleshed out these days. We are very picky about things like that and so far, the responses have been very positive and encouraging. In a nutshell I'd say in some regards yes, but in spirit, no. We didn't have to change musically to fit my voice into the mix. Instead I've worked my vocals around the music.

**Do you listen to primarily punk rock from around the world, the U.S. or Detroit? Why?**

I love music from all over the world dude. It's always cool to reach out and embrace music on a global scale, be it punk, hardcore, ska, thrash, etc. from all walks of life. We do heavily support Detroit and local music, mostly cus' we feel we are a part of it too, and I think it's easy to relate to because Detroit bands speak a common language that kids from Detroit see and feel on a daily basis. Because I live here, Detroit music is a soundtrack to my everyday life; but, music is music, and wherever it comes from isn't so much a factor. I'm just happy knowing that kids everywhere are out there doing it. I'm always stoked to see young minds creating a voice through their music.

**Have you played with any out-of-state bands? Who and when?**

Yes, and I'd say too many to recall all of them. But there are a few that have stolen our hearts. Quarterlife Crisis is a band that we've grown very close to. They're from Long Beach, New York. If ya haven't heard of them yet, get to a computer quick and look 'em up. We have been friends since we first played with them in 2006 here in Detroit at the 2500 Club. We have taken two small tours with them, on the East Coast as well as the Midwest. Last summer was a great tour; short but powerful. We also played with great bands like the Alcoholocaust, Seasick, Iron Minds, and the dudes from Thrashantos. Also keep in mind all the great out of state bands that come out to Keep It a Threat fest.

**When did you conjure up the idea for the Keep It a Threat festival?**

Well, it's been a thought of mine for quite a while. Even in the first 7" that Aggro or Die! did, I mentioned Keep It a Threat at the end of my closing statement. That was more than a year from the first KIAT. But the KIAT we know as the fest was a collaboration between me and my friend, Dougie Tangent. He was playing with his band the Dewtons at Jamestowne Hall in Saginaw when we got together after he had played and talked a bit about the "good old days", when shit was D.I.Y. and you could go and see a shit ton of awesome bands from all over the place at one show, find out about bands and how to start one as well. Nowadays, people horde info like that because they think that it's some kind of privileged information for them or their peers, like-minded as they are, and keeping their scene "poser"-free by establishing a bullshit hierarchy. They in turn feel like pillars of their scenes because they know "people". Fuck people like that! They are the reason the scene has dwindled down to just them.

The original idea was just to throw a big ass show that involved skateboarding, punk rock and its community, in a place where kids could skate and thrash at the same time, to create a place to get kids into music as well as creating it, and to do it here in southeast Michigan, where we are from. All the good fests are never in Southeast Michigan anymore, so why not have one of our own, right?

To me, the "Threat" is how society views opinionated and socially aware young kids and the impact they have on its structure. And if kids no longer express that threat, or stand up and voice themselves, then punk music or whatever it may be called in the future is pretty much doomed. The fest I remember that conveyed that message to me was Michigan fest. Michigan fest was really cool back in the day; I remembered everything about it: The bands, the booths that all the D.I.Y. and local bands had showcasing the how-to's for copyrights, making your own merch, and even booking your own tours. And it was the first time I saw Los Crudos too! That show changed my life, and Dougie's too, cus' we shared countless stories about that same show. We just felt that was lacking today, so we just wanted to do our part in preserving something that gave us so much to look forward to and give it to kids who don't have that much to look forward to these days.

On a personal end, KIAT was also my way of keeping up with my step-dad Gary, who did plenty of shows in his time with bands like Negative Approach, Black Flag and countless others. Without him in my life, KIAT would have never happened. He passed away just a few weeks before the first taste of what it was like to walk in his shoes. I could totally see him out there, that "old dude" moshing with the kids. He would have loved it.

**What bands do you have confirmed for the second festival? Where can people go to find out more about it as it approaches?**

Well, I just can't spill all the beans just yet, but you can bet on Aggro or die! and D.A. to be there, as well as Iron Minds, A.T.G., and the A-Gang are all confirmed, and have been. But, it's way too early to give any more details with how things go (**Editor's note: This interview was conducted in April 2010, before KIAT 2**). The actual line up will no doubt change as it did last year right on up to the last minute; so, not being a dude to write a check my ass can't cash, best way to stay informed is to check with the website: [www.myspace.com/keepitathreat](http://www.myspace.com/keepitathreat). We are always talking to bands from all over, as well as taking advice from bands and kids alike. We are doing this for all of us: young and old, hardcore and poser. Keep It a Threat is about bringing music to kids of all kinds.

**What's your favorite local band to watch/listen to?**

I guess that depends on my mood; I love lots of local bands, but some of them really get my motor going at the end of the day. If I'm particularly in a shitty mood from work, Hellmouth is an awesome stress reliever! The Hand-Me Downs have a way of making me feel good too; they are fun as hell to see, and if I'm feeling down, they are always there to pick me up. D.A. is an awesome band too; they rip it up fast as fuck and some of the best times I've spent at shows recently have been at theirs. D.A. was also the first band Aggro played with that made me turn to the dudes and say "We gotta tighten shit up dudes! These guys are way tight with each other!" I've been turned on to some other bands very recently that blew my mind: Trace the Veins are the shit; high energy dudes that came out of left field to me; they are like my new must-see band. Them, and Against the Grain, who are both amazing as hell to see. Of course all these bands are in my car CD player, always!

**What's the message you want to convey with this festival?**

**Stand up and do something! So many out there will bitch cus' they've got no place to play or see shows, or there aren't any bands out there anymore and nobody does it like they used to.** It's the same excuse, but really it's because people lack creativity and ingenuity. **I say, start your own bands, make your own places to play!** Fuck, kids did it in empty warehouses with generators hooked up to car batteries and shit, in abandoned houses with kids pressing their own t-shirts and patches, or young aspiring writers out there, putting in tons of hours at the local copy house making 'zines. Fuck! Make your own labels for crying out loud! If you create it the only one that can kill it is you. With all that we have at our disposal these days, it's a shame that most kids don't even lift a finger. So, in short, the message I want to communicate is: **Get off your ass today and make a history of your own!** And while back in the day is great to remember, if our minds rest on yesterday, we won't have shit to look forward to tomorrow.

**What your regular 'adult' lifestyle, do you still go to shows?**

Not nearly as often as I'd like too, but I do get out every once in a while. Aggro plays tons of shows, so in that light, I see plenty; but I do like seeing other bands, especially ones that don't play near me often, or bands that I hear about a lot. With Aggro making a new record, the last few months have been largely spent away from shows, and being a full time parent of a two and a half year old can slow down shows a bit. But all in all, as long as Aggro keeps playing shows, I'll always be able to catch shows. I just can't wait till my son is old enough to go to shows. I hope I don't embarrass him. I thought it was cool going to shows with my step-dad.

**How is the full-length coming along? When should it be out?**

As of this time, we're about 75 % done (**Editor's note: The band suffered a recent hard drive crash, lost the tracks and had to start over from scratch**). But we want it to be perfect, so it's a "It'll be done when it's done" situation. We do everything D.I.Y., so money and recording during shows and work schedules have played a role in the lengthy process of putting the album together. But, I'd say it should be out no later than late summer. We have a reason for that, but you'll have to wait to know exactly what I mean.

At this point, only three tracks need vocals, art is being produced, and money has been saved up. So there's still hope of getting this thing done for Keep it a Threat fest. Fact is, we just want this record to be special; it's a huge turning point for us, and kids who listen to us deserve nothing but the best out of us. I can tell you I'm very proud of it thus far, and we hope you dig it too.

**What can others do to support their local punk rock scene? Is there something they shouldn't do?**

Well dude, I think what you are doing is very cool; writing about bands, music, and the scene is a productive and lasting thing, especially if it comes from those with a non-biased agenda. Not talking about reviews or anything like that; that's important in putting your opinion of a band out there for kids to read about, but what I'm talking about is capturing the experience of what it's like to be there. Not to mention that it's important in creating the images or capturing the memories that can be shared when we're all dead and gone. If not for active kids like yourself, punk would have died a long time ago. So thank you. What's not cool is pushing other kids away from it; like I've stated before, we are all posers at one time or another. If we segregate other kids based on musical tastes, we thin out the scene, and furthermore destroy what it means to be a punk. I think it's our collective responsibility to create a lasting impression on the youth; after all, they will be doing it way after we do and so on. If we are to survive, we have to get over ourselves. It leaves a nasty taste in my mouth when people act like assholes to kids for not being in the know; it's just not necessary to be that way. Also, being inventive as far as how we do shows or how we create and put out music is imperative to survival in this day and age. Seeing how things are here in Detroit with our economic situation, D.I.Y. is the way to do it, and the very most important thing of all, is to talk about it, make the kids aware of it.

**Is it a little bit ironic that punk rock, which is mostly liberal, is inhabited almost entirely by young white males? If that's a bad thing, what can be done to change it?**

I think..., Wow! Dave that's tough! I myself would love to see all kinds of kids from every walk of life get into what I do; but it's in what people have made it out to be. I think that girls don't come to shows too often because most kids are unaware of them in mosh pits, or in the worst case scenario, are too aware of them, and take advantage of them not being able to defend themselves from grabby teenage hands. It's completely inappropriate, but it happens all too often to girls. As far as say, kids of other ethnic backgrounds, I'd say that's up to the individuals themselves; again, it's in what people have made punk out to be. But if we continue to see it as black or white, boy or girl, we are only walking in the wrong direction simply by acknowledging a difference between them. It's simple; a kid at a show is still a kid at a show, regardless of race and gender. I think the right thing to do is create a positive and lasting experience for those around you regardless of who it is, and if we continue to emphasize that type of mentality, we'll get there. It takes all of us to make things like that happen; communicate that and it will happen.

**How much time and effort goes into managing a band?**

Well, let's put it this way, you've really gotta love it to do it. It can be enormously tough at times, and while it may be easier to have someone else do it for you, it always feels ten times more rewarding when you do it yourself. Working with bands and venues can be stressful, cus' you never want to step on toes, and someone almost always seems to feel screwed out of something at one point or another. But, when you get things rolling in the right direction, there's no better feeling on earth.

I'd also say that reaching out to a community of like minded people is a must. Nothing can truly be done alone; things like word of mouth, advertising, and just getting kids into it, it takes everyone to do that. I'm sure you know that; putting out a record or comp isn't all peaches and pussy dude. But, seeing it in a kid's hand, or hearing about it through other kids is an awesome feeling.

**Anything else we missed that you want people to be aware of?**

Yes: Each other. By that, I mean in the pit or in other social settings. Kids don't get into punk or any other scene because they want to be disrespected, beaten at shows, or hurt by those they think are on their level. I speak from a lot of my personal experiences. I know and very much remember what it feels like to be an outsider looking into something I thought I belonged to. Hate is just ignorant.



## HELLMOUTH- GRAVESTONE SKYLINES ALBUM REVIEW

Is there any album angrier than Hellmouth's first album *Destroy Everything Worship Nothing*? If ones exist, they are few, far between and held in mutual high regard by punk rockers everywhere (i.e. the Negative Approach *s/t 7*", Black Flag's *Damaged* and *My War*, Hated Youth's *Hardcore Rules 7*", and so on). Now, there is one for Hellmouth to add to that list: Their second full-length, *Gravestone Skylines*. The sheer doom and anger is a marriage Ozzy Osbourne and Henry Rollins could only imagine. This is one of the most powerful albums of the last decade, possibly the last fifteen years. Nowhere else is leukemic loathing and intense instrumentation coitally united so well to give birth to a genre appropriately labeled misanthropic hardcore thrash.

One of the album's most important focal points is the move towards a more metallic guitar sound; the riffs, although reminiscent of hardcore youth, are much more borne of Slayer than the Circle Jerks or the Germs. Still, the metal sound is no less influential or energetic. The music still evokes the same subconscious sadomasochistic tendencies of man, arousing the urge to rip out one's own skin and the skin of all surrounding mankind alike. There is no optimism here; there's a time and a place for positivity and this is not it. The rhythm section is pummeling and punishing; the bass and drums are the fitting background noise for singer Jason Navarro to project his pessimistic, nihilistic, heartfelt bile. This record isn't just misanthropic hardcore thrash; it is a blueprint of a scorched earth solution for humanity, a collection of maxims and arrows for modern man to live by. This album also (as though it didn't do enough) serves a dual purpose: It is simultaneously unifying and empowering. It unifies listeners in its inherent mutual misanthropic message, and in its own twisted, nihilistic way, shouts, "Yes, you can!" Both the animal-god and the cult cipher are spoken to and will process their respective interpretations of the same message.

This record is much more than an excellent collection of cult anthems to listen to and consume; it is empowering pessimism incarnate. Inevitably, the world will end and you will die. The question put forth by this album, and the one to be answered is, "Will you die on your knees or will you die on your feet?"

## MOLESTED YOUTH 'WE'RE ALWAYS GOING TO BE EATING BREAKFAST ALONE' REVIEW

What's in a name? A lot of things are, primarily meaning, whether intended or interpreted. Some names are coined to be remembered, others to provide meaning to a person/ place/ thing, and some are coined to shock the general sense of society's moral values. Regarding the latter, the first of these moral manglings was the Dead Kennedys, a play on the frequent deaths of the family of political aristocrats. Next was Anal Cunt and Seth Putnam's forceful jabs at the political correctness instituted by recent changes in social hierarchy (song titles including: Women: Nature's Punching Bag, Ha Ha Holocaust, I Made Your Kid Get AIDS So You Could Watch It Die, and others that make the world cringe with laughter). Following this now is 80s-style hardcore band from Toronto known as Molested Youth. Only a demented genius could come up with something so laughably insensitive, hilarious and thought-provoking all at the same time. Could the impossibly awesome name be held up to par by a six-song 7"?

Oh, indeed it could and it did. The band pulls off both an 80s hardcore sound and a relatively newer sound, blended together seamlessly. The guitar is extremely raw, gritty and has a very jump-off-the-amp-and-rage sound to it; unexpectedly stellar, to say the least. The rhythm section is equally low-fi and speedy, managing to both blast out ravaging rampages of punk and bombastic, destructive breakdowns when called for. The singer, in his hardcore rage, released his PTSD-laden stress through his youthful cries and loud, raspy screams. Much like the "quiet time" for an adult, it comes to an end all too soon, albeit with a happy ending.

This Toronto quartet's 7" is a ripping record. Keep an eye on these guys and the Toronto punk scene in general. You don't want to miss this or anything else to arise from the city's fruitful punk rock scene.

## DEATH CRISIS TOUR SHOW AT THE CAGE, GRAND RAPIDS, OCT. 18, 2010

There are roughly 150 miles of road in between Michigan's two most populous cities, Grand Rapids and Detroit. It comes out to being about a two hour drive from the east coast of the mitten to the west coast. That isn't the only divide between the two cities, however; within each city is a thriving punk rock scene, and yet there remains a wall of division higher than the one between punk rock and polka. Grand Rapids bands are a rare sight in Detroit, and Detroit bands too are hesitant to travel, largely ignoring western Michigan altogether. This is a tragic occurrence on both fronts; both sides of the state have major contributions to offer the all-inclusive Michigan punk scene. I have experienced the Detroit scene, and until this show, I hadn't seen what the Grand Rapids/Western MI scene had to offer. So off I went to see if I should believe the hype about Grand Rapids hardcore.

The Oily Menace (I believe they're from Lansing) was first to take center stage at this hole-in-the-wall warehouse in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids. Grinding away short, snappy songs of powerviolence, this two-piece was intense, but I have never and probably will never understand grindcore or powerviolence outside of the inherent self-deprecation and the hilarious song titles that arouse my morbid, misanthropic, politically incorrect, insensitive sense of humor. The band itself was okay, but I saw nothing particularly outlandish. This band is very new, however, so I won't count them out yet. Good for grindcore/ powerviolence maybe, not so much for a guy who admittedly fails to understand it, so one may do with that what one will.

Next up was touring band Death Crisis from San Diego. The band came around Detroit sometime last year, and I missed an opportunity to see them then, so I was overjoyed to get another chance to catch them. Having never heard this band before at all, I lacked any preconceived expectations, and I was pleased when I saw the intense, venom-spewing, thrash-filled 80s style hardcore I love, with a slap on the back to Chicago Spaniards Los Crudos. This band was a fresh experience for me, a group of multi-cultural punk rockers from the other side of the continent, perceivably feeling the same anger and rage I do. The differences between our respective communities do not seem so large after all.

Following them was Positive Noise, fronted by Punks Before Profits Records co-conspirator Ryan Cappelletti. I had only heard one track online before the show, noticing little that was special. I didn't know how this set would go; what Ryan and Co. delivered far exceeded my expectations: Driving this band is Youth of Today and RAMBO mixed with a healthy dose of organic cocaine and communal awareness. The inward frustration channeled into outward positivity was represented in the lyrics and vibe, which set the band apart from the usual 625-ish hardcore. This band proved Grand Rapids punk is not to be ignored, by Michiganders or by touring acts. Wrapping up the show was local anarcho punk group Attention Span. Vocalist Trent took the mic and raged his street punk influenced anarchist noise to the crowd, to much avail. The snotty anger and raspy rants engrained all that is good about anarcho-punk. Dark sounds, a quick beat, and a pissed-off vocalist showed that Attention Span is a reckoning force on every lake shore in the state.

After handing out a few zines, I visited a local friend, met an intriguing philosophy colleague and left to deconstruct the wall of division between these two scenes, one Michigan punk at a time.

# ***FUCK BLONDIES/ WHY DETROIT NEEDS AN EFFICIENT DIY VENUE***

## ***GUEST COLUMN BY: AVIAN AIR ATTACK***

Every few months or so, I like to venture over to the other side of the state to Grand Rapids, to remind myself what's missing in Detroit's punk scene: A DIY venue.

I'm not talking about the Trumbullplex, which does actual punk shows a handful of times a year, saving most of their theatre space for hipster dance parties; I'm not talking about the Bohemian National, which at this current date is not operable due to a several thousand dollars utilities debt. I'm not talking about the occasional basement show in some godforsaken corner of Detroit that lasts a handful of shows before its owners get tired of having their house trashed. I'm talking about an actual, community-run, donations-funded, non-living venue.

Not really a “sister” city, so-to-speak, Grand Rapids seems to me more like the “distant cousin” of Detroit: people at shows are almost always young and energetic actually willing to move around without fear of spilling their beer; the average show has six or eight bands, each of which has a set that never seems to last more than fifteen minutes, which always seems to be more time than they need at any rate. Every show has new bands I've never heard of before, and every show has at least band I end up liking quite a bit: Cloud Rat, Religious SS Disorder, Positive Noise, Shallow Breath, Xtra Vomit, Damages, Oily Menace, Attention Span. I have yet to have had a truly bad experience out there, or been to a show I didn't end up enjoying. The Thunderdome, the DAAC, and the Cage are at least three non-profit, DIY venues in the city of Grand Rapids that pop into my head.

On the opposite side of the state, my own city seems to be sorely lacking in this aspect: most shows seem to hold a somewhat predictable lineup of bands, to an extent: if you look at a random flyer, odds are likely you've seen every local band listed at least twice so far in the past month. Odds are likely that, if you're lucky, the show will be at one of the bars that actually allow minors, or even people under 21, in the show: most don't, or at least make it quite a hassle. Or, in a worst-case scenario, you might find yourself wanting to go to a show at Blondie's.

I'm sure every single one of us either has, or has heard, a bad story about Blondie's; usually, the story seems to follow the lines of what happened when the Verbal Abuse/Capitalist Casualties/Fang tour passed through: Blondie's doesn't advertise the show, makes any local band who wants to play sell some number of overpriced tickets; if the band actually manages to sell all the tickets, they MIGHT get to play a fifteen minute set. If, that is, the show actually goes on. If not enough presale tickets are sold, more than likely Blondie's will cancel the show AFTER people have already paid at the door to get in, then pull guns on the unfortunate band that's from out-of-state, trying to find out what's going on. If enough presale tickets ARE sold, and the show goes on, the out-of-state band has a 50/50 chance of getting told that they didn't sell enough tickets to get paid, and, hey, better luck next time.

Not only is that complete and total horseshit from any angle you look at it, but it is also completely against the spirit of independent music. If you have to book a show at a bar, please try to make it at a venue that at least lets the bands run the show: The Double 00, the Comet, the Painted Lady. Fuck Blondie's.

But if you really want to follow the punk rock spirit, why are you booking a show at a bar in the first place? I understand that we all like our drink, but can't we all agree that any basement show or abandoned storefront show is a million times more fun than almost any bar/venue show we've ever been to? I've had a lot of talk with people about the idea of helping me open a DIY venue, but few people seem to have taken it further than talking to me about it; I love this city, and I love the punk scene it's developed, but I'd love to see everyone help put together something that can be OURS. I'd love more than anything to help open a venue that doesn't kick you out for not being old enough, that doesn't cancel shows because not enough people paid a week ahead of time to get in, that doesn't make you pay to play, that doesn't have bouncers throwing you out for trying to stage dive or mosh too wildly or give a beer to your friend who's unluckily not old enough to buy it for himself. If Grand Rapids, hell, if almost every other city in the United States can do it, why can't we?

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# MICHIGAN AREA SHOW SCHEDULE, FEBRUARY TO APRIL

- Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> Wastelander, Borrowed Time and Failed at Mac's Bar in Lansing
- Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> Agress, Damages, Flowering, and From Hell at the Thunderdome in Grand Rapids
- Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> Screams of Christ, Zombie Jesus & the Chocolate Sunshine Band, and Martel at the Belmont in Hamtramck
- Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> D.A., 40 Oz. of Spite, and Cheerleader at the Break Room in Grand Rapids
- Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> Cobra Skulls, No Control, The McFlies, and City Yards at Smalls in Hamtramck
- Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> Disposable Society, the Loose Ties, Face of Violence, CbJ, and the Explicit Bombers at Woobie's Bar in Flint
- Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> 211 Fest with Swine Flu, AIDS, Lt. Dan, Live to Kill, Taozins, and Broken Teeth at Northend Studios in Detroit
- Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> 40 Oz. of Spite, Taozins, Explicit Bombers, Desiring Dead Flesh, Lobster Ect, the Yuck Yucks, Color Change, CbJ, Skitch and Before Color at Old Jamestowne Hall in Saginaw
- Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> Punk Rock Formal with Bill Bondsmen, Population, Replicas, Louder Than Bombs, and Red Red Red at the Magic Stick in Detroit
- Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> Agress, Nothing But Weeds, and Old Soul at Justice Records in Mt. Pleasant
- Feb. 13<sup>th</sup> Beast in the Field, Ozenza, and Hordes at the Strutt in Kalamazoo
- Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> Hash Blazer and Suburban Bloodshed at the Two Way Inn in Detroit
- Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> Protomartyr, the People's Temple, and Terminal Girls at the Painted Lady in Hamtramck
- Feb. 19<sup>th</sup> Ratfinks, Plain Dealers, UDI, and Broken Teeth at Corktown Tavern in Detroit
- Feb. 19<sup>th</sup> Die Strong, Endeavors, Bearfoot, and Siksexsins at the High-Five Hideout in Inkster
- Feb. 20<sup>th</sup> Hellmouth, Redlights, Apostles, and Against the Grain at the Cage in Grand Rapids
- Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> The Toasters, Clear Blue Ska, Ailat, Take A Hint, and Shark Week at Mac's Bar in Lansing
- Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup> Motorhead and Clutch at the Orbit Room in Grand Rapids
- Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> Malicious Intent, Sordid Circle, Graveyard Punx, and Glitter Trash at the Token Lounge in Westland
- Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> Death by Stereo, Transit, New Venice, Epic Fail and Homelife at Mac's Bar in Lansing
- Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> Choking Susan, the Loving Dead, Explicit Bombers, and Cheerleader at the Ritz in Warren
- Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> Fireworks, Mother of Mercy, Harms Way and Weekend Nachos at the Static Age's last show blowout in Romeo
- Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> Flatfoot 56, Almanac Shouters, and Ackley Kid at the Strutt in Kalamazoo
- Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> Broken Teeth, I Am Cursed, Bearfoot, and Exploder at the Painted Lady in Hamtramck
- Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> Trapped Under Ice, Dead End Path, No Values and Face Reality at the Static Age's last show blowout in Romeo
- Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> Marter, Xtra Vomit, Dip Shit System, and Oily Menace at the Thunderdome in Grand Rapids
- Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> Snakewing, The A-Gang, Yeti vs. Yeti, and Boom Swagger Boom at Northern Lights Lounge in Detroit
- Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> What Counts, Explicit Bombers, Taozins, Clear Blue Ska and Screams of Christ at Basement 414 in Lansing
- Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> Native, Xerxes, They Come in Waves, and Skeleton Party at the DAAC in Grand Rapids
- Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> Empire! Empire!, The Dirty Dives, Action Adventure World, Blood of the Unborn, Knowlyfe, Cheerleader, Hawk and Son, and HYDRA at Woobie's Bar in Flint
- Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> Brian Posehn at the Machine Shop in Flint
- Feb. 28<sup>th</sup> Weedeater, Zoroaster, Chapstik, and From Hell at the Magic Stick in Detroit

Mar. 2<sup>nd</sup> Smackmadam, Ozenza, Lost Coves, and Beast in the Field at the Comet Bar in Detroit

Mar. 4<sup>th</sup> Left Lane Cruiser, Against the Grain Furious Frank, and Allen County Tire Fire at the Break Room in Grand Rapids

Mar. 4<sup>th</sup> The Hubies, Squints, and the Dewtons at Juke's Bar in Grand Rapids

Mar. 5<sup>th</sup> xTyrantx, Smash Your Enemies, What Counts, From the Ropes, From Hell, Fight It Out, and Murder Myke at Club 789 in Jackson

Mar. 8<sup>th</sup> Bailout, Due North, Dick Hickey, Din Bin Had, and Seized Up (CD release show!) at the Atlas Bar in Hamtramck

Mar. 12<sup>th</sup> The Adicts at Harpo's in Detroit

Mar. 12<sup>th</sup> State, Nightbringer, and CL1 at Woodchuck's Bar in Toledo

Mar. 12<sup>th</sup> My Friends, The Pit Fest with Urban Blight, Molested Youth, Raw Nerve, Culo, Forcible Discipline, No Class, and more at the E.S. Jungle in Indianapolis

Mar. 12<sup>th</sup> The Lobotomys, Lenny Stoofo, and one TBA at Hybrid Moments in Ferndale

Mar. 12<sup>th</sup> Act As One, the Jub Jubs, Anti-Logical, Frank and Earnest, Desiring Dead Flesh, Voices Low, and Society Kills at Olde Jamestowne Hall in Saginaw

Mar. 13<sup>th</sup> White Guilt, Hot Mess, Shattered Badge, and one TBA at the Thunderdome in Grand Rapids

Mar. 14<sup>th</sup> Bitter End, The Carrier, Powertrip, Hardside, Accidents and What Counts at Mac's Bar in Lansing

Mar. 18<sup>th</sup> Mustard Plug and more TBA at the Blind Pig in Ann Arbor

Mar. 18<sup>th</sup> Noose, Razor Fade, End Trails, Face Reality, and Cloud Rat at the Metal Frat in Ann Arbor

Mar. 18<sup>th</sup> Ironwill, Dick Hickey and Saint Fiacre at the Two Way Inn in Detroit

Mar. 19<sup>th</sup> Mustard Plug and more TBA at the Strutt in Kalamazoo

Mar. 19<sup>th</sup> Inhaling the Plague, Destroy the Moon, the Plague Years, and Infinite Design at Corktown Tavern in Detroit

Mar. 19<sup>th</sup> State and more TBA at the Elbow Room in Ypsilanti

Mar. 27<sup>th</sup> Bailout, 40 Oz. of Spite, Against the Grain, and Chances Are at the Comet Bar in Detroit

April 2<sup>nd</sup> Choking Susan and more TBA at Woodchuck's in Toledo

Apr. 2<sup>nd</sup> 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Hash Bash in Ann Arbor

April 2<sup>nd</sup> Those Poor Bastards and Goddamn Gallows at Mac's Bar in Lansing

April 8<sup>th</sup> The Wonder Years, Fireworks, Such Gold, Make Do and Mend, and Living with Lions at the Loft in Lansing

April 9<sup>th</sup> Make Do and Mend, Castevet, Daytrader, Living With Lions, and Stay Ahead of the Weather at the Metal Frat in Ann Arbor

Apr. 10<sup>th</sup> Subhuman, Millions of Dead Cops, U.D.I., and one TBA at Smalls in Hamtramck

April 21<sup>st</sup> Accept and Sabaton at Blondie's in Detroit

April 23<sup>rd</sup> Choking Susan, Dirty Whiskey, Dryvel, Six Months Gone, Gods of Kansas and more TBA at Simon's in Allen Park

April 24<sup>th</sup> Reverend Horton Heat and Reverend Payton's Big Damn Band at the Magic Stick in Detroit

Apr. 30<sup>th</sup> Dead City Saints, Broken Teeth, Taozins and Bearfoot at the Comet Bar in Detroit

Apr. 30<sup>th</sup> The Young Guns tour with We Are the Union and The Forthrights (possibly more TBA) at Mac's Bar in Lansing

May 13<sup>th</sup> State and more TBA at the Blind Pig in Ann Arbor

May 18<sup>th</sup> Reverend Horton Heat and Reverend Payton's Big Damn Band at the Intersection in Grand Rapids

May 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> Screeching Weasel 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fest in Chicago

May 28<sup>th</sup> Bled Fest 2011 with multiple bands at the Hartland Performing Arts Center in Howell

June 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Chaos in Tejas #7 Fest with Youth of Today, Doom, Larm, F.Y.P., Fucked Up, Dillinger Four, and more in Austin, Texas

June 6<sup>th</sup> Murder Junkies, Broken Teeth, more TBA at the Double OO Pub in Redford

# THE SKOLARS/ TELEGRAPH SPLIT 7" REVIEW

What was third wave ska's pivotal point? It's an issue indeed worthy of lengthy debate. The Hollywood incorporation of ska music into film, the rise of pop influence in the music, and the tide of a generational wave of musicians playing like-minded music concurrently are all contributing factors to the escalation, plateau and following decline in ska's popularity; the mid-90s ('95 to '98 specifically) were undoubtedly the peak of that popularity. Preceding this horn-heavy, offbeat pop-ish punk sound known to most as third wave ska was the split 7" of two generally same-membered bands, the Skolars and Telegraph.

This piece of plastic only has four tracks, yet in those four tracks is the essential blueprint for third wave ska, albeit with a very Detroit-influenced sound. There is unparalleled power in these four songs; where better has the simplistic angst of punk rock been joined in marriage with the complex, offbeat nature of ska? Hardly anywhere.

The opening and final track written by the Skolars, "Thanks", is one of the best ska songs ever written. All-inclusive in ska and punk's natures, the vibe is angry, yet offbeat, near danceable; where did this sound come from? It was fun, fresh and foundational. Within is every part of a good ska song: Less gruff, more sing-a-long style of vocals, an offbeat-accented guitar with a clean sound, pervasive, steady horn lines, a short horn solo, and a minute breakdown of sorts, although this one is more pop than punk-influenced. The music has a somber, somewhat sad tone; not since my first ska show or my experiences with ska stalwarts Treehouse Rivals have I been more emotionally moved by a ska song. Following is a cover of the song 'Razors', for which the Skolars do much justice. It's hard to escape the somber tone with which the band plays, but it is bittersweet. It's sad, yet optimistic, akin to an end with a consecutive new beginning. This was an excellent, non-generic cover song choice; well done. Flipping the record over, the bitterness of the Skolars sound ends and the sweeter sound of Telegraph begins.

"Quit Your Band" has more of third wave ska's pop influences, of which Telegraph eventually would follow more strongly as their career went on. Regardless, the song is a step above the greater portion of third wave; the reassuring sound of Jeff Sanguis' voice is what trumps the whiny, sarcastic and nasally voices of the band's third-wave peers. Concluding the record is the horn-happy third wave prototype "Open 24 Hours". While clean, there remains a ubiquitous sound, subliminal or overt, of real Detroit grit. Despite the financial support from sizeable, affluent record labels, more famous bands are outdone by Telegraph with fewer resources and greater swagger in their step.

For an experienced listener of ska, this is just another in a long lines of third wave at first. However, given the time period, financial and popular status, and completeness of the record, there has not been such a fine piece of third wave ska released. The record seems only to improve with each passing listen; it alone makes the investment in a \$100 USB turntable worthwhile. I may need a new needle when I'm through with this record.

## UPCOMING RELEASES

Death in Custody 'The End Result' CD  
Boom Swagger Boom full-length CD  
Broken Bones 'Fuck You and All You Stand For! LP  
Koffin Kats/ 12 Step Rebels split album  
The Amoebas full-length LP  
Speed Trails- Worst Bands of Michigan Vol. 1 12" LP  
Hash Blazer/ Swine Flu split 7"  
Shitfucker 'Sex Maniac' 7" EP  
Battlecross full-length album

## NEW/ RECENT RELEASES

Koffin Kats 'Forever for Hire' LP  
Shallow Breath 'Dismantled Renew' cassette  
Switchblade Justice full-length CD  
The Hand-Me-Downs 3-song sampler CD  
Oily Menace 's/t' cassette  
Xtra Vomit/ Cloud Rat split cassette  
Timmy's Organism 'Rise of the Green Gorilla' LP  
Fisherking 'Leaving Home/Bull Run '61' online release  
Wells 2011 3-song demo

## INTERVIEW WITH JIMMY LAWSON OF DEATHSKIN RAZORS & SHADES OF RED

**When did Deathskin Razors form?  
What are some of the other bands members have been a part of?**

Deathskin Razors was formed in summer of 2007. We've had mixed members of many bands. Those bands include: All Hype, Shades Of Red, Cheapshow, Face Reality, TV Suicides, Schizo Gerkin, and probably 1000 others.

**What was the inspiration for some of the lyrical content and imagery?**

Our singer Jon Carpus is the one who is in charge of the lyrics. Whatever he feels he wants to write about is all coming from his brain. I know he just writes about whatever he is feeling at the time.

The imagery is a mix of everyone in the band. We like having a more 'dark' imagery now. When we started out, it was more of a fun/ party feel to it.

**What bands have you come to collaborate with and enjoy locally?  
Nationally?**

We have played with so many bands in the past few years. Some local favorites would have to be the Bill Bondsmen and Hellmouth.

Nationally, we have opened for many touring bands. We basically will play any style show, with many bands. The list goes on and on.

**When did you get some of the songs for your 7" written?**

Me and our drummer, Nate Davis, have been friends for a long time, and had kind of written some of the songs before Deathskin was actually formed. The 7" consists of songs that were written before Deathskin was a band, and a few songs written in early 2008.



**How did Deathskin Razors' summer tour go? Any memorable moments that you can recall?**

In my opinion, the tour went great; we played an awesome fest called Screaming for Change fest in Bristol, VT, played lots of basements and houses, and met a lot of awesome people and bands. We had to borrow DJ Liden "Junior D" from Under Anchor to play drums for us on tour. He did an awesome job, and he helped us out so much by doing that.

**Where did you play some of your first shows?**

Our first show just so happened to be at the best Michigan venue... The Hayloft (note sarcasm). It was a shitty battle of the bands that was offered to us; surprisingly, we took 3rd place and a good amount of people showed up. I believe there are YouTube videos of it.

Other venues included the 2500 Club, The Pink Birdhouse, The Painted Lady, Marshments Basement, The Trumbullplex, and random houses and basements.



**When is the split 7" set to come out? What band is it with? How did you discover and eventually collaborate with them?**

The split 7" will hopefully be coming out in the early 2011. The 2nd band is called Prophet, Said I from New Jersey. In February, 2010 I had a basement show in a house I was living in. They just so happened to need a show that day on their tour, and I invited them to play it. It worked out great, and we became great friends. We hooked up with them on tour, and decided it would be fun to do a split together.

**How and when did you get Shades of Red together? What's the future for that group?**

Shades Of Red has been an ongoing project for a long time coming. Rob Mansel wrote the songs, and asked a few of us if we were interested. We just found a singer, and hopefully everything starts rolling with it soon.

Who knows what the future holds.

**Is there a decent place to get a reliable source of shows? If so, where?**

I feel that depends on the promoter; but, most shows get listed on the MIHC board site, and the MIHC Facebook.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Michigan-Hardcore/119871291405834?ref=ts&v=info>

<http://www.michiganhardcore.onlinegoo.com>

**What's the best place to see a good local show? Why?**

Well, that really all depends. MY favorite local venue would have to be the Trumbullplex; everything about that place is great. You can always catch good shows in local basements, The Magic Stick, Smalls, Static Age. It just depends on what you want to see.

**What does the future hold for Deathskin Razors? Any other releases, weekend tours, or notable shows coming up?**

As of right now, we are getting everything together for the split 7". There will most likely be a tour with Prophet, Said I to promote it. We have no shows booked at the moment, and would love to change that (*Editor's note: Deathskin Razors broke up and played their last show in December.*).

**How has the Michigan hardcore scene changed since you first started the band? What have you done to change it?**

That's a hard question to answer; I feel like many other cities do, where venues have come and gone, bands have broken up, and new bands have started. I feel it's just an endless cycle of the whole scene.

I don't feel I've done anything to "change it"; I have done my best in helping out with shows, booking my own shows, giving bands places to stay, and so on. I feel it is a huge group effort, and I do what I can to help any touring band, local band, venue, local business, and person in the progress of this scene.

**How did you come to be involved with Refuge Skateshop? What made you decide to get involved with the benefit show?**

I can't say I'm involved with Refuge at all. I just see it as a help-me, help-you situation; Eric Z has put out tons of records and booked many shows in his day. What he does is great for the hardcore and skateboarding community.

I decided to help with the benefit because he has done so much for everyone else, so why not give back; he deserves it.

**Do you feel there's a disconnect between two hardcore scenes in Michigan? If so, what should be done to bridge the gap?**

I definitely feel that there are two hardcore scenes. I hope we can book more shows that have a varying lineup; I feel it's the easiest way. I think the Fight Like Hell shows have been doing a great job of that.

**What does the name 'Deathskin Razors' mean?**

"Deathskin Razors" came from the Sega Genesis game Mutant League Football. We chose it because we are a bunch of nerds who liked Sega Genesis. It's much better than the original name... "Cobra". Yuck.

**Do you (or does someone else) write most of the music, lyrics, or both (for Deathskin Razors & Shades of Red)?**

In Deathskin Razors, the music is written by me, Nick and Nate. The lyrics are all Jon Carpus.

In Shades of Red, Rob Mansel has written most of the music. We started having more frequent practices, where we all get our hand in it. Steve Muczynski is in charge of the lyrics.

**Anything else you wish to add?**

All of Deathskin Razors releases are self- released on mine and Jon's label, Splattercat Records. Add our Facebook page! It has all our releases up for download!

<http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100001878226488>

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## VINYL: SCRATCHED OUT OR SCRATCHING THE SURFACE?

Vinyl started out as one of the first ways to record, save and store sound in the 1890s; all audio was released on vinyl records until the technology surge of the early 1970s. Succeeding vinyl first were 8-tracks, then cassette tapes, then compact discs, and now digital releases are music's modern mainstay. Most of these mediums have died off; 8-tracks are pure nostalgia for 70s burnouts, cassettes are effectively limited to rough home recording mixes and the sporadic worthy crust release, and CDs are on their way out (although it is the last physical storage medium, since digital music isn't tangible). Though these preceding music storage forms are dropping in popularity, one contradictory change has taken place alongside it. Following a severe drop-off in the 1980s in favor of smaller, higher quality audio storage, vinyl is celebrating a grand resurgence. National noteworthy acts like the Gaslight Anthem, Iron Maiden, Green Day, techno & house artists, and others all have and continue to release music on records. Why keep around an obsolete storage medium that seems to have no modern value? *Oh, but it does...*

Vinyl retains multiple levels of value for different people. The most common of all of these is the retro/ nostalgic value. Second is the claim of higher-quality sound over other audio storage mediums. Third is an artistic call for higher artwork resolution and an in-depth experience in the music, opposite the digital age, where music experience is greatly stripped down.

A considerable number of music connoisseurs, good, bad and hipster, hold vinyl as an elevated format for music, because of the nostalgic value inherent to vinyl. Since music has evolved and it becomes more and more difficult to achieve uniqueness, vinyl is looked upon as a relic of the past, a piece of originality and the times when that given genre was original. This is the prerequisite for retro status, and vinyl qualifies, as it is one of the first storage mediums for music. Connecting the vinyl subculture to a remembrance of good times past is the origin and purpose of this obsession.

Another claim for vinyl's continued prosperity is that of higher sound quality. I believe this is true, but only to an extent. The majority of music in the modern age is ripped, stored into computers and compressed into smaller files, ranging from 128 kbps to 320 kbps. It might even be formatted into a .wav file, a sizeable audio file of the highest quality possible for a ripped music file. So, in a way, music sound quality has, and has not downgraded. It has in that the colossal rise of smaller music files has lead to a forthcoming decrease in the quality of the music's sound so that it may fit an ever-growing list of desired songs. It has not downgraded in that sound files of equivalent quality absolutely exist, but they are considerably sized files that take up room in a limited capacity storage drive. The third and final claim in defense of vinyl is the all-around sensory experience of the music. Music today is usually just a song or an album; there are downsized levels of artwork, liner notes, imagery and personal experience. Vinyl has full-size artwork, at least one insert for liner notes, and presents a fuller, more personal undertaking, like someone really cared about their artistic motives. It takes actual effort and energy to pull out a record player, pick up an album, slip it in, and turn it up. It's not as effortless as flipping a switch on a Zune or an iPod, only to shuffle between and among a variety of songs, genres, and artists. This is an additional reason people still choose vinyl over digital today.

Physical music mediums are amidst their death throes, but so long as a niche market with a purpose remains, they will not disappear entirely. Musicians who rely on their music for income may not release their music on vinyl or any music medium, but that often comes with the cost of altering music from a fun, enjoyable hobby to a serious profit-seeking endeavor. Artistic integrity is lost when profit is the primary goal of music (or any art); any artist desires his bread and his circuses; but to take music and play to profit, not for the sheer love of the endeavor and the experience of and within it is a cowardly compromise. Although artists can maintain their artistic integrity and have digital-only releases, this is the exception to the rule; usually, digital music underscores the purpose of providing an experience, opting for economic and commercial viability. Music mediums are not dead, and vinyl isn't either; there is a considerable market for these slabs of black wax, and it is foolish to write it off as a ghost of the past.

## BENEFIT FOR REFUGE SKATESHOP AT THE TRUMBULLPLEX SHOW REVIEW

I'm unfamiliar with Refuge Skateshop, outside of some of its financial hard times; however, the shop undoubtedly draws a supportive crowd of punk rockers, old, young and temporarily retired. When word got out that the shop had some money problems, Hawk I frontman Ian Courtney gathered his resources and put together an eleven-band bill to help raise money for the steadfast, sickly establishment. Although originally booked at the Bohemian National House, unforeseen problems (power was shut off) occurred and the show was swiftly shifted to the Trumbullplex in a day's time without a hitch. A raffle for cool punk shit, an eleven-band bill for a killer price, and a majority of the bands being undiscovered by myself. What could go wrong?

The first band to roll off of Trumbull St. and onto the Trumbullplex stage was Down N Out, who came in with a newer hardcore sound. "Oh boy, another new-Agnostic Front and Cold as Life wanna-be", I thought to myself at first. The speed eventually went up and the band showed that they were more than just a rip-off of a played-out, generic trend; they actually had something about them worthy of taking note. That energy, that personal drive, that speed was what drove Down N Out to be an adequate opener. I'll be on the lookout for them.

Quickly changing over, Build & Destroy went on next. The vocals cut in-n-out due to a couple of mic issues. In spite of the unique singing style employed by the vocalist, I wasn't won over by this set. The band's sound seemed to lift the style used by new-age hardcore bands directly from the blueprint; breakdowns were over-used instead of employing a multitude of varying techniques. Build & Destroy has the capability to be a decent act, but bands (not just them) need to learn that breakdowns aren't so much a centric focal point as they are a pentagonal point.

Next was Louder Than Bombs, one of two bands I had previously seen. This rock-infused set of punk wasn't as impressive as when I saw them at the Garden Bowl in December of 2009, but it was still passable. With a variety of influences, the band sets themselves apart from their colleagues, and with that comes a difference in personal perception. The music was enjoyable rock and adequate punk, and regardless of genre, it really IS fucking loud.

After LTB was interim band Shades of Red, who only played 7-8 minutes of music, and still made it impressive. They used different types of methods to express themselves, maintaining their speed and not letting up. This group has some potential; hopefully there's a demo or EP in the near future. Hardcore youth, pay some attention; Jimmy Lawson may well have the golden touch.

Face Reality was up; the first thing I noticed was the singer, sporting a varsity jacket with Michigan Straight Edge on the back and a giant X on the front. I have an axe to grind with the straight edge's gang mentality (not the drug-free status of one member, but the mob mindset as a whole); I didn't know if I was going to see a set of punk sounds or a sermon for the United Church of Straight Edge. Upon sound initiation, the vocalist raged full-force with his youthful energy and powerful punk drive as the band thrashed behind him. Face Reality was the highlight of the night; I stood motionless, blown away by how incredible they were. Flying ligers and mares, oh my; Minor Threat on fast forward, Face Reality is one of my new favorite local bands. Check. This. Shit. Out.

Hawk I, playing on a popular Marvel Comics character for a name, took center stage next. The vocalist, Ian Courtney, was this show's mastermind; his vigorous promotional work did not dilute his performance energy, as the band put forth one hell of a show. Ian put so much energy into his performance that all that was necessary for the band was to keep time; needless to say, they did and it showed. The heart put into the performance was what drove this set. I underestimated these guys; get a demo, go to a show, experience this musical force.

Following was From Hell, who has been active as of late; however, I had yet to catch them. Here, I did, and I saw what I had missed. Unfortunately, the loud factor in punk rock only works so much before it is overextended, and that made the set hard to listen to. While the singer screeched, the band ran the “wall of sound” theory over the cliff. This band hinders their potential by beefing up the distortion and speed to the point of where neither are discernible. If distortion and volume were toned down a bit and the vocals weren’t so forceful, From Hell could be worthwhile.

The second band I saw before, Nightbringer, was next. Despite making some annoying commentary regarding paying electricity bills, the singer (and the rest of the band, who were innocent of these remarks) pushed out a fucking lively, Luciferian set. Playing tracks off the recently released 7” and a few new ones, Nightbringer crafted a dark energy that will positively haunt the Detroit punk scene for years to come. Every member is an indiscernible, irreplaceable piece of the band; I think after I grow weary of punk pundits Black Flag, SFA, and E.T.A., I’ll listen to this band when I get pissed off. What a force this band is to reckon with.

After Nightbringer exited stage left, the Detroit Birds united for the first time in four years; it was clear they’d been yearning to get out again. The Birds set off the crowd in an extravagant way, tearing up the ‘Plex and playing killer tunes; any reputation the Birds had (since I had never heard of them before), I’m sure it is deserved, if this set was akin to previous sets by the band. I know I’ll be seeking an album or EP by the band soon (**Editor’s note: I bought the Endangered Species 7”, well worth the money**). It was impressive, well-deserving of the name Detroit.

Playing second-to-last was oddly named band Razzle Dazzle, or Rzl Dzl for short. I had read about the band before the show, and it seemed they were a respected force, like the bands that played before them. I wasn’t really disappointed, nor was I impressed; the band clearly had influence over the crowd, but I didn’t really “get” it. It was out there and while not unlistenable, it was also not for me. Still, life is fluid, not static.

Closing the show was Fireworks. I departed after two songs, weary and hungry; however, my inspection indicated the band was slightly pop-ish punk, like the Buzzcocks if they were born in Detroit. I did like what I happened to hear; check these guys out if you haven’t already.

The Skateshop took in a hefty sum of green-colored buoyancy; hopefully it brings rejuvenation to the shop. Without a doubt, the benefit show brought out the unity hardcore fans can possess. Myself, I rediscovered why I dislike Vans and why I still loathe the straight edge gang mentality; regardless, I had a good time checking out these newer bands, and this show won me over as a Refuge supporter.





# CASSETTE CORNER

## **LIVE TO KILL- 4 TRACK ATTACK EP REVIEW**

This recording is, by far, the most unequivocally raw recording I've ever heard compiled. This mix of crusty, grinding thrash possesses a lot of rage and political disgust. The band might have benefitted from a more refined, cleaner sound; this is not to say the songs are shit (I'll get to my opinion of them in the next paragraph), but there is sufficient cause to title the tape "4-Track Attack". A cleaner re-recording of these tracks would help this stalwart band receive more positive attention from fans and critics alike.

The first song, "The Human Condition", is a speedy, lengthy burst of fury with a memorable, unique guitar riff mimicking a heavy, hopeless cry. 'City of Tomorrow' kicked up the speed and cast the proverbial gloves away, attacking with serrated fury. Live to Kill specializes in grinding crust with decipherable, high-pitched shrieks; this is where they are different from overdone crust and lifeless grind. 'Trip' and 'Have We Learned Anything Yet?' carry the torch of raw crust, pushing for a very lo-fi, low bass, screeching sound pushing towards thrash rather than crust; this approach only gives the band a larger demographic and a more lively sound. Rounding out the tape is a cover of Aus Rotten's "They Ignore Peaceful Protest", a crusty classic fitting the band well; the track isn't Aus Rotten's best or most coverable (Fuck Nazi Sympathy and Perverted Patriotism are my personal favorites), but the band does the song justice as the session runs out as the tape continues.

For raw, thrashy crust punk, this tape is worth a listen. The band could benefit from a re-recording of these tracks to bring a stronger, deeper and more leveled sound, however. The tracks are not worth overlooking and the best possible justice deserves to be done to them.

## **NEGATIVE LIFESTYLE/ SCHOOL JERKS SPLIT EP REVIEW**

Cassettes are unfortunately fading; with the advance of technology and the relative lack of general nostalgic value, cassettes have little going for them. They function as a reliable source for homemade demos and 4-track music; outside of these, they aren't too useful other than for maybe hiding illicit narcotics in the tape case. Still, this small sect of underground music yields a shocking quantity of superior punk rocks songs. This tape is one such example.

Negative Lifestyle is the first band on the cassette. Hailing from Sweden, their sound is a tad removed from American hardcore, being much more lo-fi and ominous. These songs are fucking dark; color me surprised, since the band has the word negative in the name. Their sound is Ian MacKaye if he stole the mic from John Brannon and fronted Negative Approach, with a minor nod to the UK thrashcore band Voorhees. The singer is angry, but he doesn't growl like Brannon does; he's more of a yeller, and it better suits the music. Three tracks with a youth crew-style vocalist and a gnarly, menacing vibe. The opposite side of the tape are three bratty, 80s-style hardcore songs by Toronto sons (of bitches and anarchy) the School Jerks. They came roaring with these sounds, very akin to a kindergarten class shouting to a sophisticated rant, complete with groovy power chords and drums in-time. Everything the band has released fucking rules, even if it trickles out 3 or 4 songs at a time. I'm waiting for more.

Cassettes aren't coming back, but if more bands release material like this split tape, the judgment day will be far delayed, and I hope it is. Solid, stellar, and short.

# *SEX, DRUGS, AND ROCK & ROLL:*

## *SUBVERSION AND CONVERSION*

Once a force for rebellion, rock and roll was feared to be a great moral panic to teenagers and society; it was dangerous, it was fun, it was a lifestyle that could only be experienced. Parents, senators, police, teachers, and squares abroad all united in their decree against rock music because it was a far-out, socially influential force to be reckoned with. The union of these moral authorities to trample rock and roll led to skyrocketing demand, variation, and eventually, the force overwhelmed the moral majority. Rock music persisted because of interest from all social ranks and it required individual sensory perception to properly grasp it. Time passed, and as rock and roll became socially accepted, it began to get into safe hands, where the music was akin to a factory product: Manufactured, impurities purged and absentee danger. Soon, people fell for this illusory act, be it a conspiracy-laden, bigamist marriage between the moral majority, consumer corporations, and the record industry or simplistic consumer ignorance. People got into safe, acceptable rock and roll, thinking they had become alienated, while they were no more than a white sheep suffering from a racial identity crisis. People like being considered “cool” without having to do anything, so they drank the purple Kool-Aid and accepted cleansed rock and roll as a faux dangerous product, subverting the innate urge to rebel. To date, there has not been a more effective tactic of cerebral subversion, or ‘brainwashing’, if you will. New, dangerous music was revived, soon suffering the same fate as its predecessors. Man is easily tripped up in delusions of grandeur, and safe music marketed as dangerous rock-n-roll has mutated rebellious action into a lobotomized version of its previous self. Dangerous music always has and always will exist; although a statement reeking of elitist exclusivity, the perilous music of society’s outsiders must be protected and the singular conscious of the individual freedom fighter must be preserved.

What was the catalyst for the dilution of danger in rock music? One can generally draw one of two conclusions: Either it was the product of an alliance between RIAA labels and radio stations that promoted music for the masses of people to be stimulated by, or the truth was the inverse, where musicians seeking fame and fortune would seek to play utilitarian music, opting for a capitalist concoction rather than an expression of self, beliefs, and experiences by way of music. This watering down of individual values for financial gain has been the poisoned vein for real rebellious music, and each genre of music slowly unravels because of the tainted nature of these musical pursuits. Some bands ran lost their way, turning an original idea from a mostly unique derivative into a diarrhea of words, chords and drum beats. Green Day with pop punk, NOFX with political punk, Lil Wayne (and he’s just the shining star of shit mountain) with hip-hop, Hatebreed with hardcore, Catch 22 with ska, Metallica with thrash metal, Cinderella with hair metal, and Dropkick Murphys with Oi!/ street punk. What might have been saved if these bands had more than a one-track mind of an American capitalist consumer and producer?

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